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2008

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Notes/Citation Information Published in *The 5-Minute Obstetrics and Gynecology Consult,* Paula J. Adams Hillard (Ed.), p. 322-323.

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TAMPONS AND MENSTRUAL HYGIENE PRODUCTS

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DESCRIPTION

- Menstruation is a major stage of puberty in girls, usually starting at any age between the ages of 8 and 13.
- Women usually lose 1–4 Tbs (<80 mL) blood during normal menstrual period.
- A wide variety of menstrual hygiene products are available. They are available in 2 major categories:
 Reusable
- Reusable
 Disposable
- Menstrual hygiene products include:
- Menstrual pads
- Tampons
- Menstrual cup
- Padded panties
- Sea sponges
- Miniform
- Menstrual pads are used as a protective cover outside the vagina, to absorb menstrual flow; available in a wide variety of sizes, shapes, and brands.
- Maxi pads are for heavy days and mini pads or panty liners for light days:
 - With wings:
 - Pros: Keeps pads in place
 - Cons: Can abrade inner thigh
- Without wings
- Thong-shaped
- Small, medium, large, hourglass shapes
- Tube shape with straight sides
- Can be with:
 - Deodorant:
 - Pros: Smells good
 - Cons: Can cause local irritation
- Nondeodorant:
- Pros: Odor indicates vaginal infection and shouldn't be masked
- Cons: No artificial smell

- Different sizes;
- Regular maxis
- Super maxis: Longer than standard pad for extra protection overnight or for heavy flow days
- Thin maxis: Thinner than typical pad
- Ultra-thin maxis: Even thinner than thin maxis; may have absorbent gel; useful for lighter-flow days
- Tampons are finger shaped devices used inside the vagina to absorb menstrual flow, are also available in a wide variety of sizes, shapes, and brands.
 - The water values of sizes, singles, and stands.
 They are considered as medical devices by the FDA and require label with absorbency standards.
- Pros:
- More comfortable than pads,
- Cosmetically appealing and can be worn during activities such as swimming and gymnastics
- Cons:
- Risk of TSS
- Requires changing every 4-6 hours
- Can cause irritation/discomfort/dryness
- Learning curve for insertion and removal can cause clogging of sewer if flushed down the toilet.
- Incidence of UTIs reported in 1 study to be significantly higher among tampon users than among pad users.
- Available with a choice of applicators:
- Plastic
- Cardboard
- Assembly required
- None
- Absorbencies as defined by FDA:
- Light: <6 q of fluid
- Regular: 6–9 g of fluid
- Super: 9–12 g of fluid
- Super Plus: 12–15 g of fluid
- Ultra: 15–18 g of fluid

- FDA guidelines for decreasing the risk of contracting TSS:
- Follow package directions for insertion
- Choose the lowest absorbency for your flow
- Change your tampon at least every 4-8 hours
- Consider alternating pads with tampons
- Don't use tampons between periods
- Avoid tampon usage overnight when sleeping
 Know the warning signs of TSS such as fever
- with chills, vomiting, diarrhea, dizziness
- Menstrual cup is a barrier, either inverted bell shape or diaphragmlike device, to collect menstrual fluid
- Pros:
- Economical
- Can be worn for 12 hours
- Environmentally friendly
- Comes in different sizes
- Cons:
- User must wash hands prior to use
- Can be messy
- Can leak
- Needs proper cleaning and storage
- Risk of TSS not well established, as product is not widely used
- Padded panties have washable absorbent pads, are economical, preferred alternative for allergies to synthetic materials used in disposable pads.
 Not frequently used in US
- Sea sponges are ancient practical alternative to
- absorb menstrual flow
- Pros:
- Cost effective
- Intravaginal absorbent
- Environmentally friendly
- Easy to use
- Cons:
- User needs to wash hands prior to use
- Need to boil prior to use
- Can leak and be messy
- Risk of TSS not well established, as product is
- not widely used
- Needs proper cleaning and storage

 Miniform is a small pad designed to fit between the labia minora.

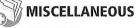
- Pros:
- o Small size
- o Discrete
- o For light days or tampon backup
- Risk of TSS not well established, as product is not widely used
- Company is exploring use for incontinence, and as a diagnostic testing mechanism for HPV
- Cons:
 o Absorbs small amount of fluid
- May be displaced during movement
- o Needs frequent changing
- o Costly
- Not widely available

Pediatric Considerations

- Choice of menstrual hygiene products is a matter of personal preference, and many young adolescents choose to learn to use tampons even with the 1st menstrual period.
- For more information on TSS and or menstrual TSS see Septic Shock and Toxic Shock Syndrome.

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- Omar HA, et al. Tampon use in young women. J Pediat Adolesc Gynecol. 1998;11(3):143–146.
- The Museum of Menstruation and Women's Health. http://www.mum.org
- The Tampon Safety and Research Act of 1999, H. R. 890, U.S.A. U.S. Food and Drug Administration. March-April 2000.



ABBREVIATIONS

- FDA—U.S. Food and Drug Administration
- TSS—Toxic Shock Syndrome



- Many girls are interested in using tampons from the
- onset of menarche.
- Mothers or other family may be concerned about tampons affecting virginity:
- Reassurance
 Assurances of normalcy

- Inability to use tampons:
- Anxiety and vaginismus vs. hymenal abnormality
 A guide to 1st tampon use at
- http://www.youngwomenshealth.org - Wikihow:
- How to know when you're ready to star using a
- tampon at: http://www.wikihow.com/ Know-when-You%27re-Ready-to-Start-Using-a-Tampon
- How to use a tampon at: http://www. wikihow.com/Use-a-Tampon/

PREVENTION

- Imperforate hymen should be noted in delivery room or neonatal nursery.
- Hymenal variants and abnormalities should be detected by primary clinician in prepubertal years.

Section III